WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   A system for defining a price curve and approaching market equilibrium in an on-line buying co-op for a product, which comprises:

5   (a)   an e-commerce server data processing system, said e-commerce server data processing system including e-commerce server software executable on said e-commerce server data processing system and configured to define an on-line buying co-op for a product;

(b)   a storage device coupled to said e-commerce data processing system and

10   having stored therein a database including at least price and quantity data for the product; and

(c)   a merchandising staff client data processing system coupled to said storage device, said merchandising staff client data processing system including client software executable on said merchandising staff client data processing system and configured to receive merchandising staff inputs for defining the buying co-op for the product, said client

15   software including a market equilibrium manager to establish a price curve for the product in the buying co-op by utilizing the price and quantity data for the product in said database.

2.   The system for defining a price curve and approaching market equilibrium in an on-line buying co-op for a product of claim 1 in which said client software is further

20   configured by including data entry tools to establish a start time and an end time for the on-line buying co-op, at least minimum quantities of the product offered and a starting price for the product.

3.   The system for defining a price curve and approaching market equilibrium in

25   an on-line buying co-op for a product of claim 2 in which said client software is further configured by including a display component configured to manipulate and display data associated with the on-line buying co-op on said merchandising staff client data processing system.

30   4.   The system for defining a price curve and approaching market equilibrium in an on-line buying co-op for a product of claim 3 in which said e-commerce server software is further configured to store price and quantity data of offer inputs from buyers in said database and said market equilibrium manager is further configured to obtain updated price data and offer data from said database, said display component being configured to display

19

the price curve, an offer histogram. and other information suggesting the price point at which market equilibrium is achieved.

5.   The system for defining a price curve and approaching market equilibrium in an on-line buying co-op for a product of claim 4 in which said display component is further configured to allow merchandising staff inputs to modify the price curve by direct manipulation of the price curve display.

6.   The system for defining a price curve and approaching market equilibrium in an on-line buying co-op for a product of claim 5 in which said client software is configured to translate the modified price curve to data with a data format for storage in said database.

7.   The system for defining a price curve and approaching market equilibrium in an on-line buying co-op for a product of claim 6 in which said display component is further configured to display a yield amount from sale of the product based on data from said database.

8.   The system for defining a price curve and approaching market equilibrium in an on-line buying co-op for a product of claim 7 in which said display component is further configured to modify the displayed yield amount from sale of the product as the price curve is modified.

9.   A process for defining a price curve and approaching market equilibrium in an on-line buying co-op for a product, which comprises:

(a)   defining an on-line buying co-op for a product;

(b)   storing in a storage device a database including at least price and quantity data for the product;

(c)   accepting inputs from buyers in the form of offers for the product;

(d)   using the buyer inputs to modify the database;

(e)   receiving merchandising staff inputs utilizing a market equilibrium manager to establish a price curve for the product in the on-line buying co-op by utilizing the price and quantity data for the product in the database.

10. The process for defining a price curve and approaching market equilibrium in an on-line buyers' cooperative for a product of claim 9 in which the on-line buying co-op is defined by using data entry tools to establish a start time and an end time for the buying co-op, at least minimum quantities of the product offered and a starting price for the product.

11. The process for defining a price curve and approaching market equilibrium in an on-line buying co-op for a product of claim 10 further comprising the step of:

(f)   managing, adjusting and displaying data associated with the on-line buying co-op.

12. The process for defining a price curve and approaching market equilibrium in an on-line buying co-op for a product of claim 11 further comprising the step of:

(g)   obtaining updated price data and offer data from the database and displaying the price curve and an offer histogram.

13. The process for defining a price curve and approaching market equilibrium in an on-line buying co-op for a product of claim 12 further comprising the step of:

(h)   receiving merchandising staff inputs to modify the price curve display by direct manipulation of the price curve display.

14. The process for defining a price curve and approaching market equilibrium in an on-line buying co-op for a product of claim 13 further comprising the step of :

(i)   translating the modified price curve to data with a data format for storage in the database.

15. The process for defining a price curve and approaching market equilibrium in an on-line buying co-op for a product of claim 14 additionally comprising the step of:

(j)   displaying a yield amount from sale of the product based on data from the database.

16. The process for defining a price curve and approaching market equilibrium in an on-line buying co-op for a product of claim 15 additionally comprising the step of:

(k)   modifying the displayed yield amount from sale of the product as the price curve is modified.

17. An article of manufacture, which comprises a computer readable medium having stored therein a computer program for defining a price curve and approaching market equilibrium in an on-line buying co-op for a product, the computer program comprising:

(a) a first code segment for defining a buying co-op for a product;

(b) a second code segment for storing in a storage device a database including at least price and quantity data for the product;

(c) a third code segment for accepting inputs from buyers in the form of offers for the product;

(d) a fourth code segment for using the buyer inputs to modify the database; and

(e) a fifth code segment for receiving merchandising staff inputs utilizing a market equilibrium manager to establish a price curve and approach market equilibrium for the product in the on-line buying co-op by utilizing the price and quantity data for the product in the database.

18. The article of manufacture of claim 17 in which the first code segment includes code for receiving merchandising staff inputs for defining the buying co-op for the product.

19. The article of manufacture of claim 18 in which the first code segment is configured to define the buying co-op for the product by establishing a start time and an end time for the buying co-op, at least minimum quantities of the product offered and a starting price for the product.

20. The article of manufacture of claim 19 in which the computer program additionally comprises:

(f) a sixth code segment for manipulating and displaying data associated with the on-line buying co-op.

21. The article of manufacture of claim 20 in which the computer program additionally comprises:

(g) a seventh code segment for obtaining updated price data and offer data from the database and displaying the price curve and an offer histogram.

22.   The article of manufacture of claim 21 in which the computer program further comprises:

(h)   an eighth code segment for receiving merchandising staff inputs to modify the price curve display by direct manipulation of the price curve display.

23.   The article of manufacture of claim 22 in which the computer program further comprises:

(i)   a ninth code segment for translating the modified price curve to data with a data format for storage in the database.

24.   The article of manufacture of claim 23 in which the computer program additionally comprises:

(j)   a tenth code segment for displaying a yield amount from sale of the product based on data from the database.

25.   The article of manufacture of claim 24 in which the computer program additionally comprises:

(k)   an eleventh code segment for modifying the displayed yield amount from sale of the product as the price curve is modified.

26.   A system for providing a graphical user interface for displaying data graphically, which comprises:

(a)   a display;

(b)   a data processing system coupled to said display;

(c)   a storage device coupled to said data processing system and containing a database;

(d)   first software in the data processing system configured to control said data processing system for providing a graphical display of data from said database;

(e)   second software in the data processing system configured to receive user inputs for directly manipulating the graphical display of the data;

(f)   third software in the data processing system configured to supply modified data based on the manipulation of the graphical display of the data to said database;

(g)   fourth software coupled to the database and configured to recalculate dependent variables of the modified data; and

(h)   fifth software in the data processing system configured to display feedback dependent variable data on said display with the graphical display of data from said database.

27.   The system for providing a graphical user interface of claim 26 in which the second software in the data processing system is configured to receive the user inputs for directly manipulating the graphical display of the data by allowing the user to move at least one data point in the graphical display.

28.   The system for providing a graphical user interface of claim 27 in which the fifth software is configured to display feedback dependent variable data on said display by showing at least one changed numerical value with the graphical display in response to moving at least one data point in the graphical display.

29.   A process for providing a graphical user interface displaying data graphically with a data processing system, which comprises:

(a)   storing data in a database;

(b)   providing a graphical display of data from the database on a display device of the data processing system;

(c)   receiving a user input to the data processing system for directly manipulating the graphical display of the data;

(d)   supplying modified data based on the manipulation of the graphical display of the data to the database;

(e)   recalculating dependent variables of the modified data; and

(f)   displaying feedback dependent variable data on the display device with the graphical display of data from the database.

30.   The process for providing a graphical user interface of claim 29 in which the user input for directly manipulating the graphical display of the data is received by allowing the user to move at least one data point in the graphical display.

31.   The process for providing a graphical user interface of claim 30 in which the feedback dependent variable data is displayed on said display by showing at least one changed numerical value with the graphical display in response to the user moving at least one data point in the graphical display.

24

32.   An article of manufacture, which comprises a computer readable medium having stored therein a computer program for providing a graphical user interface displaying data graphically with a data processing system comprising:

5   (a)   a first code segment for storing data in a database;

           (b)   a second code segment for providing a graphical display of data from the database on a display device of the data processing system;

           (c)   a third code segment for receiving user inputs to the data processing system for directly manipulating the graphical display of the data;

10   (d)   a fourth code segment for supplying modified data based on the manipulation of the graphical display of the data to the database;

           (e)   a fifth code segment for receiving recalculated dependent variables of the modified data; and

           (f)   a sixth code segment for displaying feedback dependent variable data on the
15 display device with the graphical display of data from the database.

33.   The article of manufacture of claim 32 in which said third code segment is configured to receive the user input for directly manipulating the graphical display of the data by allowing the user to move at least one data point in the graphical display.

20

34.   The article of manufacture of claim 33 in which said sixth code segment is configured to display the feedback dependent variable data on said display by showing at least one changed numerical value with the graphical display in response to the user moving at least one data point in the graphical display.